

# University Advising Center & College/School [Draft Template]

## Memorandum of Collaboration

6/21/2024

**Nature of Agreement:** Undergraduate academic advising has been identified as a top priority for institutional improvement. National best practices indicate an advising model with training, expectations, consistent standards, and accountability is one of the best and most efficient mechanisms to improve student retention, academic progression, and time to graduation. The Four-Year Undergraduate Academic Advisors Program requires shared responsibility for accomplishing these goals with a University Advising Center and academic colleges and schools.

In order to promote educational excellence, strengthen academic ties and enhance the first-year/undergraduate student experience at USC, the University Advising Center (UAC) and the College/School agree to engage in a collaborative joint program to provide, as described in *Re-Envisioning Academic Advising at the University of South Carolina*, “a coherent and common standard for Carolina advising.” These goals direct support USC’s 2023-2028 [institutional priorities and university strategic plan](#). The mission is designed within the framework of the University of South Carolina, the Office of the Provost, Colleges/Schools, Student Affairs and [Student Government legislation](#).

### **General Areas of Collaboration**

1. Recruiting and hiring of undergraduate academic advisors (UAAs)
2. Training and professional development of academic advisors
3. Certification, annual evaluation, and continuous improvement of academic advisors
4. Assessment of advising effectiveness

**Allocation of Advisor Positions:** The UAC will allocate undergraduate academic advisors to the colleges/schools based on the following guidelines.

**Rule #1:** In alignment with the [2015 A.C.T. Recommendations](#), all USC Columbia academic colleges and schools (i.e. 11) will be assigned a FY/Undergraduate Academic Advisor (UAA).

**Rule #2:** FYA/UAA allocation is based on college/school enrollment. UAA allocation(s) are determined by a 300:1 formula (i.e. 300 students = 1 academic advisor). This formula allows for optimal caseload management. Caseload management includes outreach, intervention, monitoring, etc. See UAA position description, MOC, and management documents.

### **Responsibilities of Undergraduate Academic Advisors:**

1. Provide comprehensive academic advisement to new and continuing undergraduate students from a specific academic discipline or group of disciplines. “Comprehensive academic advisement” should entail a holistic student approach that includes prescriptive advising (i.e. curricular requirements), developmental advising (i.e. co-curricular opportunities and career readiness), appreciative advising (i.e. narrative inquiry), and intrusive advising (i.e. interventions). Implement a four-year academic advising model to support students from first-year through graduation.
2. Specialize in advising first-year freshman and transfer students including but not limited to an expertise in advising at New Student Orientation, prior credit evaluation (AP/IB/CLEP/transfer, etc.), placement testing (MAP, FLPT), transition to university, guidance in involvement, changing majors, or other considerations that may put first-year students at-risk.
3. Advise approximately 300 students each year. This ratio provides approximately four hours per year for advising, monitoring, and, when needed, intervening with each student.
4. Meet one-on-one with students focusing on degree requirements and course selection, Carolina Core, major and career exploration, academic policies, academic interventions, and *My USC Experience*.
5. Monitor assigned students (advisees) and identify when they are off-track or in need of additional support and make appropriate referrals.
6. Conduct academic interventions and targeted outreach to students at critical points during the academic year.

7. Re-advise students as needed.
8. Maintain up-to-date knowledge on curriculum, University and College/Department policies. Participate in on-going trainings provided by the UAC and the COLLEGE/SCHOOL.
9. Develop understanding of the expertise of Faculty in College/School, Program Directors, and other faculty partners. Recognize when and how to facilitate student connections with faculty to explore and connect with professional development opportunities. Participate in meetings on advising with faculty. (See Advisor/Faculty collaboration document for additional options.)

### **Responsibilities of the University Advising Center**

1. Ensure advisors are trained and certified through the Advisor Training & Certification program.
2. Provide on-going training and professional development to all Undergraduate Academic Advisors assigned to the College/School.
3. Implement and monitor specialized transfer advising, outreach, and intervention strategies aimed at retention and graduation.
4. Share in the assessment of advisor performance through the EPMS form/reviewer.
5. Monitor advisor caseloads and jointly review enrollments and the number of advisors assigned to the college each year to enable a ratio of no more than 300:1 (i.e. max 300 students assigned to one advisor).
6. Host monthly or bi-monthly meetings with all UAAs and offer regular communication about institution-wide initiatives and updates.
7. Serve as the administrative home for all undergraduate academic advisors (i.e., All human resources processes will be the responsibility of the UAC, including the advertising, screening, interviewing, position description management, and hiring procedures.)
8. Provide advancement opportunities in conjunction with the College for UAAs through a tiered career ladder.
9. Provide university-wide support of all academic advisors including but not limited to curricular support (e.g. major maps, curricular analytics), technology support (EAB Navigate, DegreeWorks, Banner, Self-Service, MyUSC Experience), transfer student support (early transfer advising, direct transfer-tracks, specialized transfer retention initiatives, major change support (Exploratory Advising), academic recovery initiatives (Academic Coaching, academic probation mandates), advisor communication (listservs, meetings, TEAMS channel), student resources (videos, check-sheets, resources, flipped advising models), administrative support (e.g. hiring, promotions, liaison to HR etc.), and overall guidance and vision for excellent and equitable academic advising at USC.
10. Notify College Supervisor of new or substantially changed university-wide advisor support or training requirements, student academic recovery initiatives, and other advisor and student support services prior to communicating with advisors.
11. Make every effort to notify the College Supervisor before general blanket communications are sent from UAC to College/School advisors or College/School students.

### **Responsibilities of the College**

1. Accept the number of advisors assigned to them by the UAC. If the advisor is located in the college/school, the college will be responsible for providing the following at the expense of the college.
  - a. Private office to allow for appointment confidentiality.
  - b. Furniture equipped for advising.
  - c. Computer, phone, and technology support, including access to a printer, copier, and/or document scanner.
  - d. Office supplies and other necessary materials.
  - e. \* Note: If the Advisor(s) are located in the UAC Suite/third floor Close-Hipp, the UAC will cover all of the above expense for facilities, space, and office support.
2. Participate in a shared search process for new UAA's including application review, interviewing, and reference checking, with the understanding that the College Supervisor will make the final decision on candidate offers/hiring.
3. Support the UAC Advisor Training and Certification Program with additional mandatory college-specific advising training.

4. Share in the assessment of advisor performance through the EPMS form, with the College Supervisor serving as the primary supervisor/evaluator.
  5. Allow undergraduate advisors to shadow and observe experienced advisors in the college during advisement and orientation periods with prior notification.
  6. Support UAA participation in university-wide academic interventions managed by the UAC, including but not limited to scholarship risk intervention, non-registered initiative, and faculty issued progress reports/referrals.
- Assign up to five percent of the Undergraduate Academic Advisor I job responsibilities on assigned college operations. These operations do not necessarily need to be advising related.
  - Support the UAC Tiered Career Ladder by identifying additional duties or responsibilities (ADR) available to UAAs eligible for promotion. These duties may include (but not limited to): specialization in student populations (Honors, OSP, Transfers, Veteran/Military, etc.), conducting assessment/research projects, working with prospective students, serving on college committees, facilitating college events, promoting career readiness, working with college faculty, and other duties aimed at supporting the college. Advisor II, Advisor III, and Advisor IV college ADR job responsibilities will likely accumulate 10-40% (respectively) of the advisor role.
  - Provide a College Supervisor for all UAAs assigned to their majors. UAA supervision is key to the success of the UAA program and requires College Supervisors to provide on-going support and communication with Advisors. See “Supervision” section of the MOC.
    7. Support UAA attendance at University Advisors Network (UAN) monthly meetings, professional development opportunities, and other UAC-sponsored events.
    8. Coordinate opportunities for faculty and advisors to develop on-going working relationships. (See item 9 under UAA role.)

#### **Supervision and Program Management:**

1. **College Supervisor (EPMS Supervisor/Rater):** \_\_\_\_\_ provides direct supervision and oversees on-the-job guidance, shadowing other college advisors, and college-specific training of their assigned UAA. The College supervisor conducts EPMS reviews in coordination with UAC Assistant/Associate Director and monitors UAA advising practices. All UAA’s must have a regular point of contact within the majors they advise to ask questions, shadow, understand curriculum, etc. in order to be successful in their position. A college supervisor is defined by the following: meets 1-1 with UAA a minimum of 3 times per semester, serves as the EPMS supervisor, and provides daily supervision and support to the UAA. The college supervisor approves and monitors UAA annual and sick leave.
2. **UAC UAA Program Manager (EPMS Reviewer):** The UAC Director/Associate Director provides general guidance to all UAAs by offering reports on UAA availability, UAA completion of training and certification programs, survey data, assisting with new UAA onboarding, guiding UAA participation in academic intervention, and providing advising assessment reports. In addition, the UAC Director/Associate Director hosts monthly staff meetings with all UAA’s and offers regular communication about institution-wide initiatives and updates.

#### **Funding:**

The University Advising Center and COLLEGE/SCHOOL agree to a collaborative 50-50 professional academic advising model where salary and fringe expenses for COLLEGE/SCHOOL Undergraduate Academic Advisors will be shared equally by both departments (50%-50%). This will be accomplished through the following:

1. Move/convert position numbers 00086176, 00145388, 00001831, 00124429, 00004216 and 00150075 to the University Advising Center (Department Number: 100019) as an Undergraduate Academic Advisor. Position descriptions will be reviewed with the college supervisor to ensure filled positions are categorized appropriately within the UAC Career Ladder (i.e. Advisor I, II, III, IV).

- a. Beginning [insert date], Advisor 1, Advisor 2, Advisor 3, Advisor 4, Advisor 5, and Advisor 6 will move to the UAC as Undergraduate Academic Advisors.
  - b. Assuming these advisors participate in UAC interventions, trainings, monthly meetings, and other university advising activities, these advisors will be eligible for the UAC Career Ladders, professional development, and other employee enrichment opportunities.
2. Beginning [insert date], all current COLLEGE/SCHOOL Advisor employee funding information will reflect a 50%-50% cost split for salary expenses.
  3. Any new hires from this point forward will be hired under a 50% 50% cost-split model at the time of their hire.
  4. As Advisors are promoted through the Career Ladder, the UAC and the COLLEGE/SCHOOL will jointly share associated costs 50%-50%. All Advisor promotional opportunities, additional duties and responsibilities, and job responsibilities will be determined by the College Supervisor.

The table below shows an approximate yearly salary cost for undergraduate academic advisors in COLLEGE/SCHOOL. As advisors promote through the career ladder, these figures will change. Salary increases associated with career ladder promotion are jointly decided on by the college supervisor and UAC Administration.

<b>Advisor Position Description Mapping to Career Ladders</b>			
<b>Advisor Name</b>	<b>Advisor Classification</b>	<b>Current salary as of 10.3.23</b>	<b>Advisor Specialization/ADR</b>
Sample chart to be completed			

**Renewal, Termination and Amendment**

1. The agreement may be amended by an exchange of letters between the UAC and the COLLEGE/SCHOOL. Such amendments once approved by both parties, will become part of the Memorandum of Collaboration, and are subject to approval by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Termination of this agreement during the term of the agreement can occur with consent of both parties.
2. The UAC and the college agree to full and complete performance of the terms contained within this Agreement.

**Summary and Signatures:**

**Number of Assigned Undergraduate Academic Advisors:** \_\_\_\_\_ # \_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor(s) Office Location(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**College Supervisor Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**College Assistant/Associate Dean Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Provost Office, Asst Provost Undergrad Advisement:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

